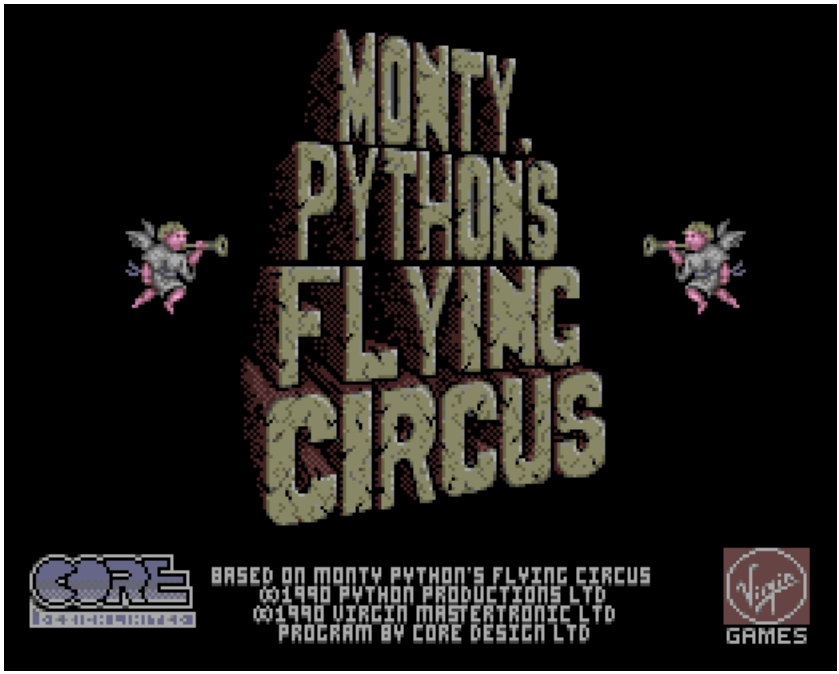
I wish I'd been a girlie, just like my dear pappa

Written by dreamkatcha. Any related videos, as always, can be found on my YouTube channel.

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic resources generously provided by immensely talented emulator authors, and communities such as Hall of Light, Lemon Amiga, Lemon 64, World of Spectrum, Moby Games, World of Longplays and Recorded Amiga Games. Thank you for your tireless dedication to preserving the history of gaming.

Expect the Spanish Inquisition and a pet shop load of stream-of-consciousness sense of the *non* variety… Monty Python's Flying Circus is in town, and baffling your Amiga's logic gates!

Development initiated late in 1989 with Core steering the looney bin, and the finished article was published in October 1990, courtesy of Virgin. Had it arrived a year later it might have been programmed in Guido van Rossum's 'Python' language, a name settled upon as he happened to be a big fan of the show. Flying Circus was the first in an eight title lineup of licensed games themed around the British surrealist comedy group, and the only one to appear on the 8 and 16 bit platforms. No it wasn't! Yes it was! Wasn't! Was!


MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS
BASED ON MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS
©1990 PYTHON PRODUCTIONS LTD
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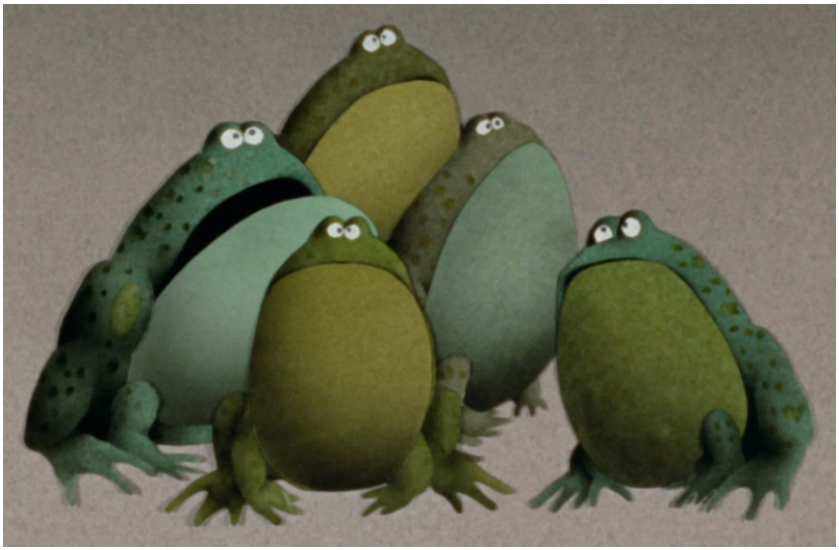
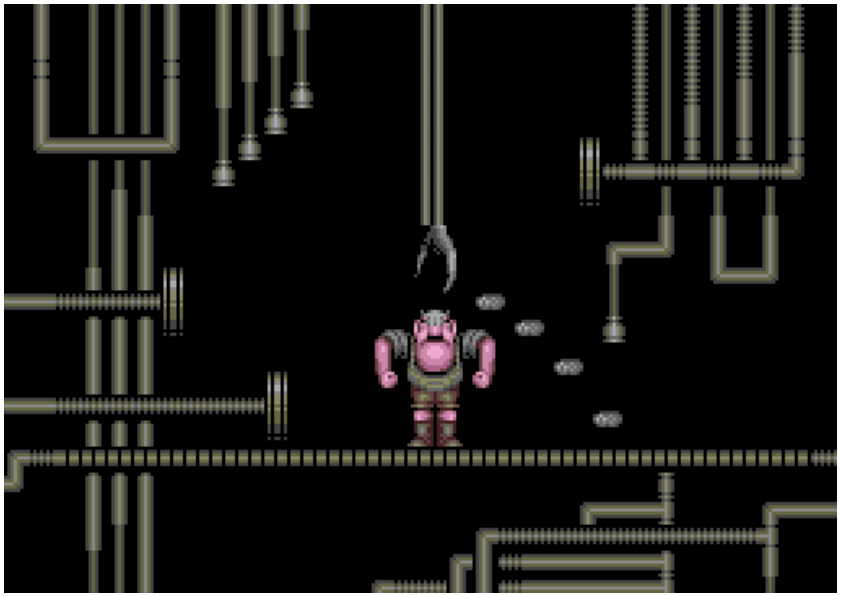
PROGRAM BY CORE DESIGN LTD
GAMES

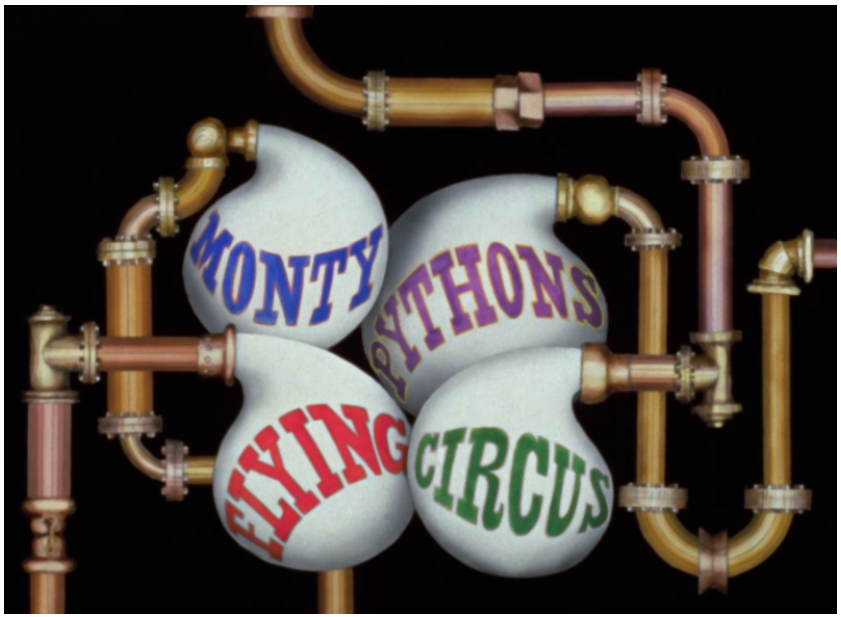
We interrupt this introduction to inform you that the Amigos Broadcasting Corporation would like to unreservedly apologise for the following review, and for any grievous mental confusion inflicted. We wish to draw to your attention that the author of said review came from a broken home, failed to receive for Christmas 1985 the Teddy Ruxpin animatronic storytelling bear he so desperately craved and never completely recovered from the trauma endured growing up with the burden of a deprived childhood. Nevertheless, the management will not be held liable for any psychiatric bills incurred through imbibing the subsequent material. Complimentary Crunchy Frogs and blancmange will be served in the foyer shortly.



You play as Mr D. P. Gumby, a recurring character from the TV show that aired between 1969 and 1974, chosen as the lead because all the Pythons at some point portrayed one of his clan. Our knotted hanky clad, tank-topped, gumbooted '50s throwback is a trifle distressed having literally lost four chunks of his mind; grey matter you're tasked with retrieving to make him whole again (if he'd watched the 'Gumby Brain Surgery' sketch from series 3 episode 6 he might have seen this coming!).

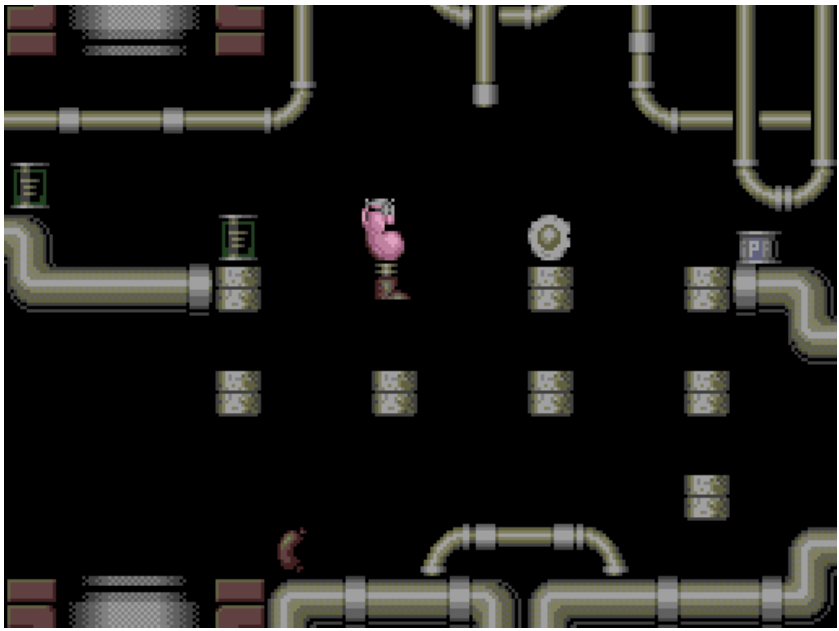


"My brain hurts! We forgot the anaesthetic!"

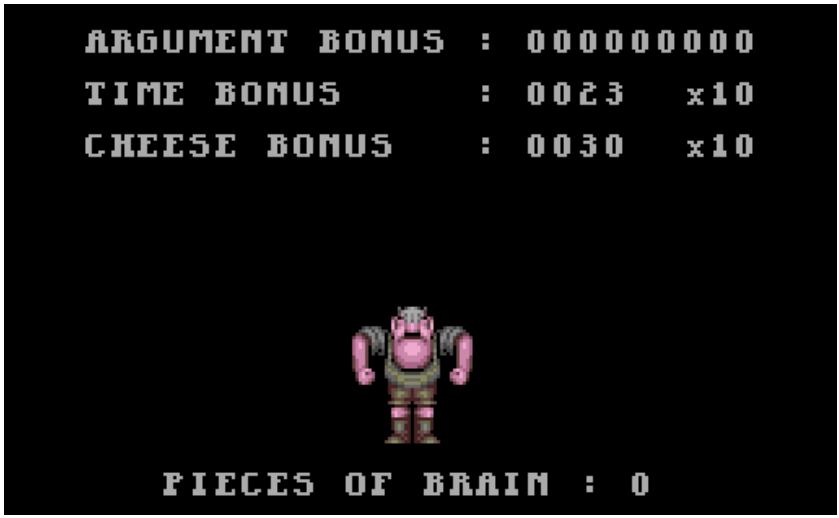


The way you go about this is entirely logical, much like the rest of the Pythonian universe… by collecting Spam, fried eggs, cheese,

bacon and sausages (English fry-up stars of the notorious 'Spam' skit of course) and regurgitating them before a falsetto-pitched *Mrs* Gumby (voiced by Terry Jones) in exchange for the missing parts of your anatomy. I mean, how else would you tackle the age-old missing cerebrum dilemma? It's what I'd do.



The Pythons being the ultimate purveyors of exquisite, processed meat(ish) products, Spam is the key ingredient - 16 cans is equivalent to 1 brain lump. Any collectables snapped up, cheese blocks bounced on or shot at serve as (anti-)points awarded during the end of level reckoning. That's right - do not adjust your set - you begin with a score of 99,999,999 and work your way *backwards* with each bonus item accrued or baddie dispatched to earn a place on the 'extremely silly scores' board. If you've never been a gaming guru, now's your time to shine!

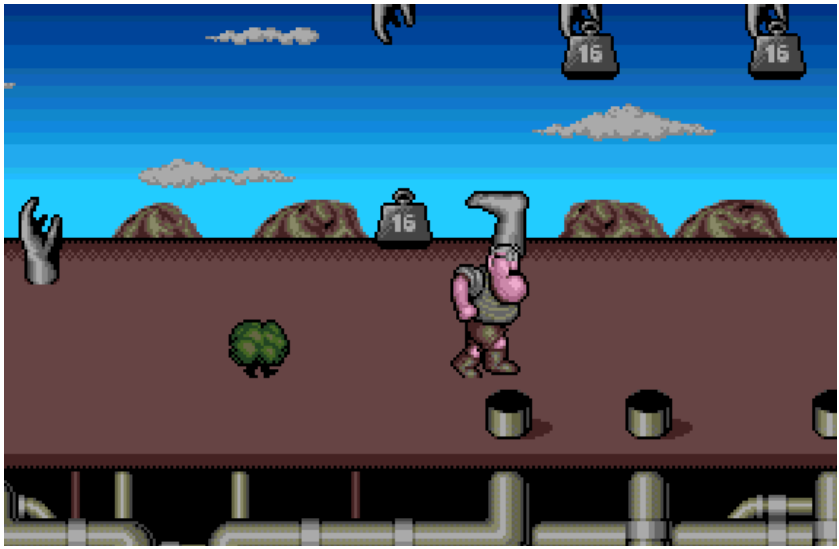


Peripheral brekkie fare can be scooped up as vitality restorers, replenishing your energy bar and allowing you to absorb enemy hits without succumbing to the threat of the infamous, ginormous foot

of doom… the real reason you often see people studying the sky whilst waiting at bus stops.

Entry to the manic mayhem is initially barred by a 'Cheese-lok' copy protection system requiring you to match an on-screen specimen with one in the game's manual to identify it. Every possible variety from Danish Fynbo to Venezuelan Beaver Cheese is incorporated as in the time-honoured 'Cheese Shop' sketch from the TV show. John Cleese has revealed that he sourced the extensive list by standing at the cheese counter of his local delicatessen with a pen and notepad… all except for those he plucked from his own imagination.

Once complete, you commence a one-screen-short, barren desert wasteland platforming section through which you stomp eccentrically, chased by a bush on legs, while 16 tonne weights are dropped on your bonce from a great height. Just another day at the office then really.



Said bush is actually none other than 'Mr Johnson' who is trying desperately hard 'Not To Be Seen' (another sketch salutation ticked off the list). You could learn a lot from his exemplary demonstration - the first rule of avoiding being shot or detonated is to not be seen.

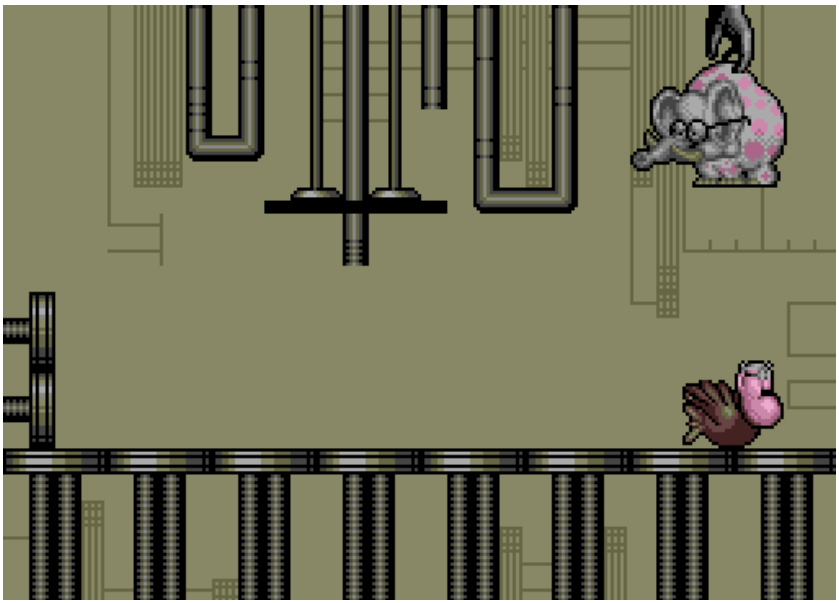
A further cameo starring the super-sized weights presents in a later level where counter-intuitively they are capable of inflicting damage to your opponents. What's this, innovation in a licensed computer game of all things?

The falling weights and their specific tonnage is significant of course because they were one of many recurring ways to terminate a Python sketch upon reaching the end of their tolerance with no discernible punchline in sight; a comedy device employed by both Spike Milligan - incidentally a major influence for the hexad - and the 'Beatles of Comedy' aka Monty Python.

> "Television has so many people going on and on, and all we wanted to do was shoot them - nicely, obviously, but just shut them up. The explosions, the sixteen-ton weight, and the man in the suit of armour hitting people with the chicken are our little protests against the way people go on

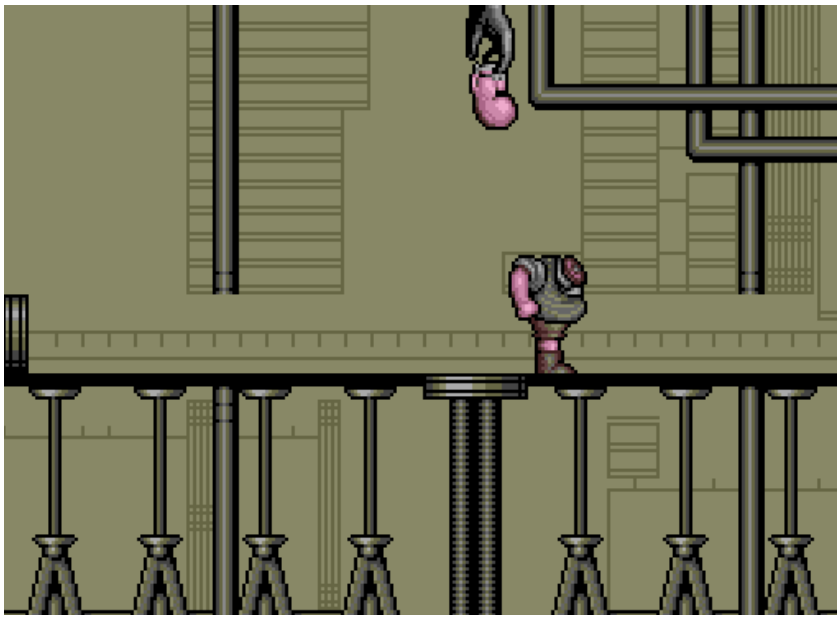
and on."

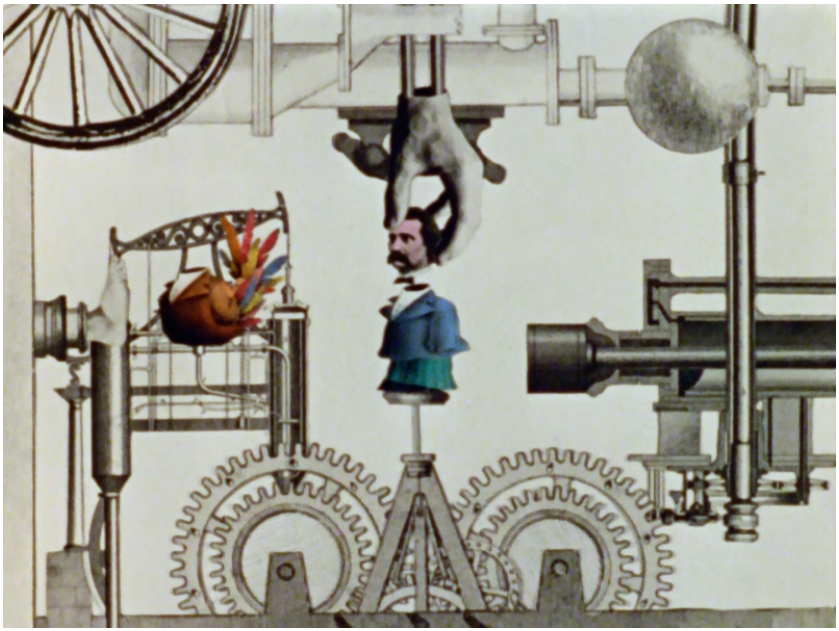
Michael Palin

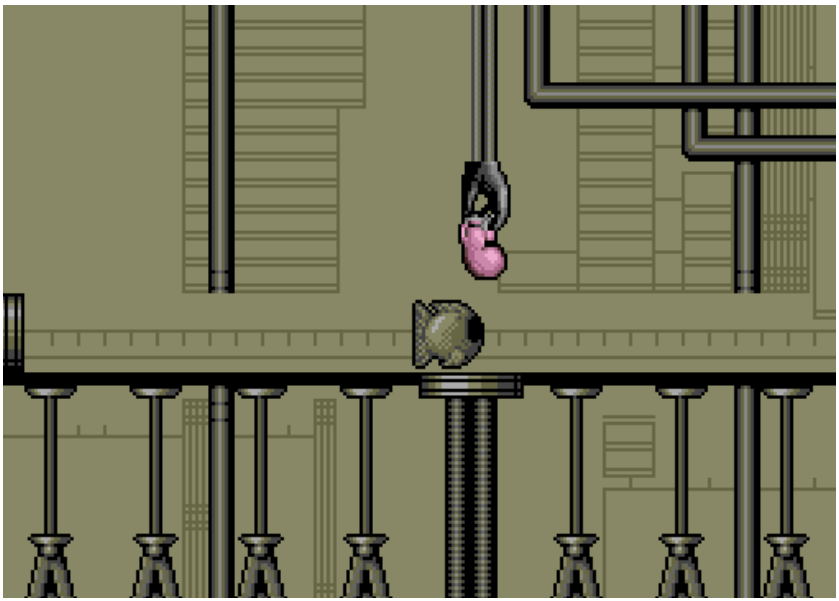


Better still is the dropped bespectacled pink polka-dot elephant you'll encounter on a later level, amongst a host of other none too subtle sketch bookends. The exception to the rule is the 'Restaurant' skit, which *does* have a traditional punchline, that's swiftly booed into a scene transition by the canned audience. This is the silliest paragraph I've ever been in. Shall we stop it?

Reaching the end of your hazardous jaunt, you arrive on a conveyor belt where a giant seaside amusements style grabby hand detaches your head from your torso and grafts it onto the first of your surrogate bodies - Eric the halibut.

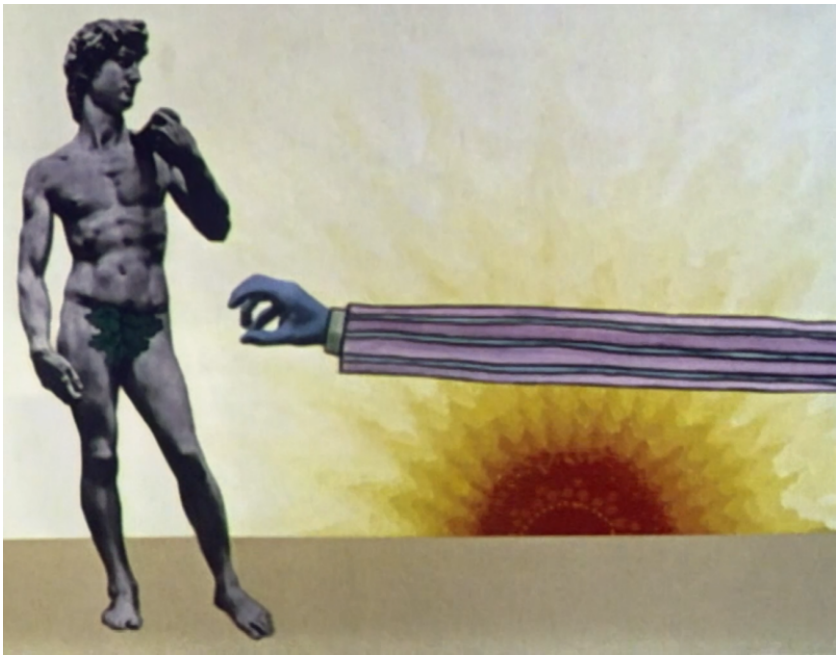






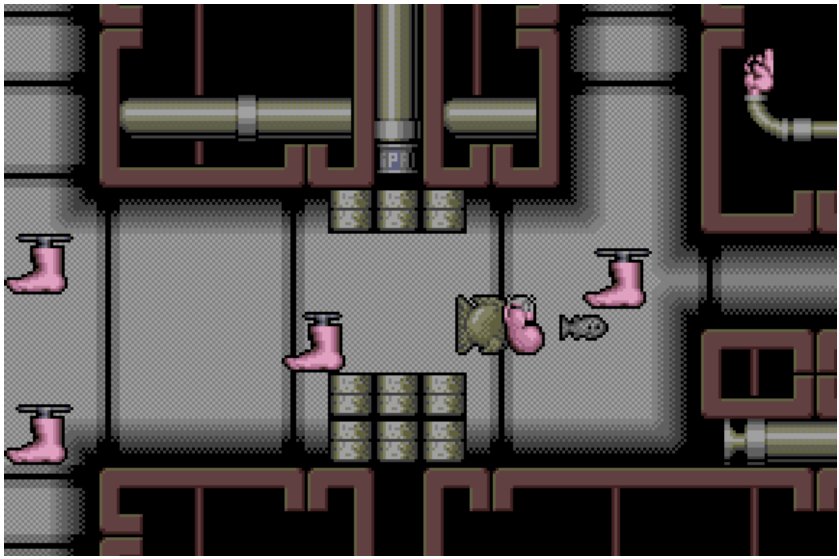
Extendo-arms interfering with people are a running theme in Gilliam's alternative animated universe so naturally, are a

prominent plot progressor in the game.



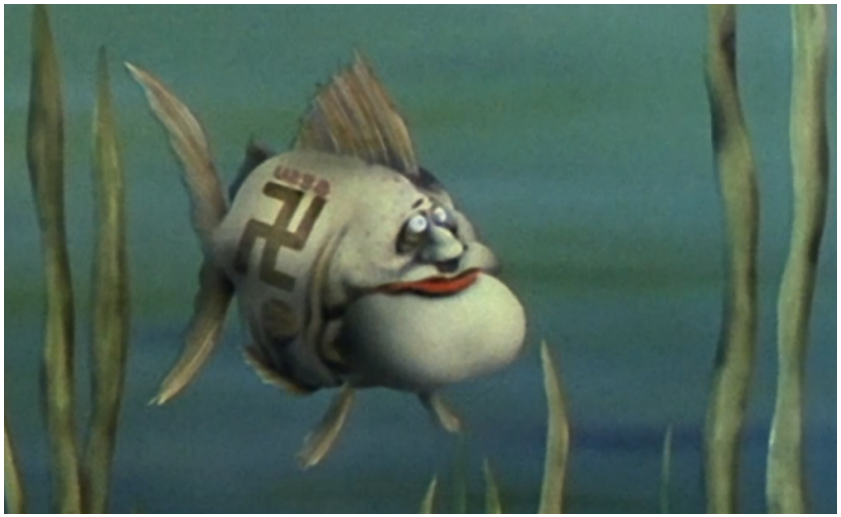
A mechanical assembly line prodder unceremoniously shunts you

into a series of water-filled tunnels serving as the backdrop for the first shoot 'em upstage. Firing an infinite supply of fishy bullets (clones of Marcel Proust's pet haddock by any chance?) at a menagerie of opponents you set about gathering the necessary comestibles.



Any aquatic craniate related shenanigans will have been inspired by the 1970 'Fish License' sketch from series 2 episode 10, or 'The Fish-Slapping Dance' that aired the following year (series 3 episode 2).

We might also have expected to see an eel or two - after all, a hovercraft will only harbour so many before they inevitably spill out and escape into an Amiga game near you. Where's the 'How to Identify Different Types of Fish From Pixel Art Computer Game Graphics' guide when you need one?



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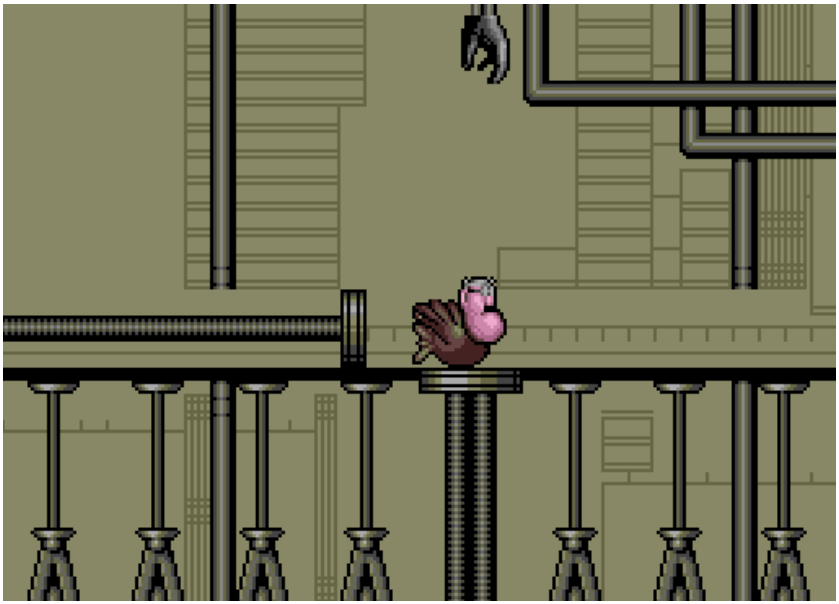
What follows is a melange of the most notable visual gags from Flying Circus, anything and everything that would translate to the digital medium without the need for extensive explanation or knowledge of the inspiration from which they are drawn. These are largely thought to be the work of Terry Jones and Michael Palin. John Cleese, the sadly late Graham Chapman and Eric Idle leaned more towards verbose wordplay and abusive confrontation; concepts that would have been more challenging to imitate in a computer game.

> "Most of the sketches with heavy abuse were Graham's and mine, anything that started with a slow pan across countryside and impressive music was Mike and Terry's, and anything that got utterly involved with words and disappeared up any personal orifice was Eric's"
>
> **John Cleese**

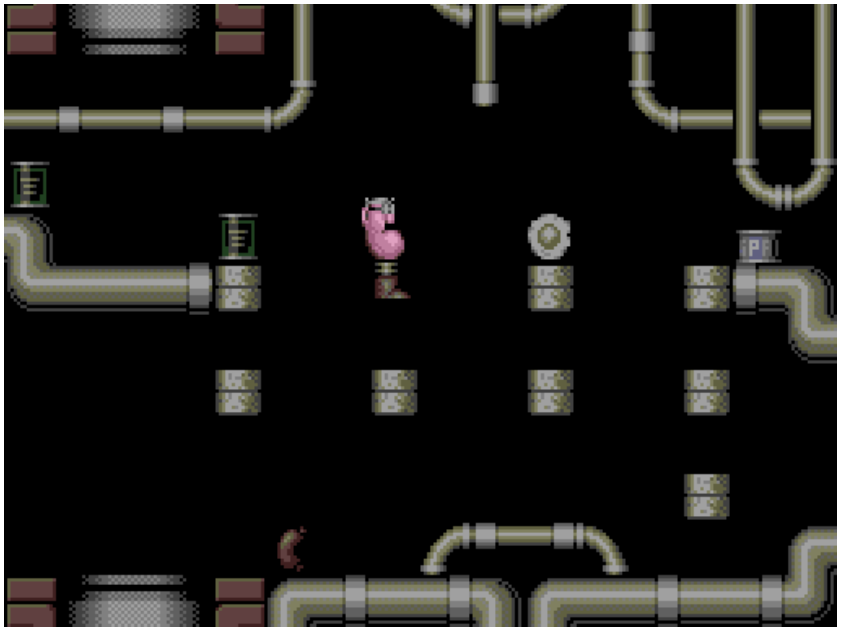


One of the four later levels sees you reunited with your own neck-down physiology to tackle another platforming stage, before once more losing touch with terra firma to become a chicken-human hybrid… the one seen in the second series opening titles.

Possibly he's a stray member of Eggs Diamond's notorious chicken gang. The Python's do seem to have a penchant for the feathered blighters though, mostly of the dead, raw persuasion Terry Gilliam's knight in shining armour would hit the cast over the head with to draw a close to overly flabby scenes in series 1 and 3.

"Invest in Malden"

Any vegetarians amongst us may prefer the head-on-a-pogo-stick-boot bonus stage where you get to pretend you're Zebedee from the Magic Roundabout. A world apart from the arcade adventure outing or mini-game medley the title was initially intended to be before the gameplay was deemed too lightweight to pass muster and subsequently scrapped.

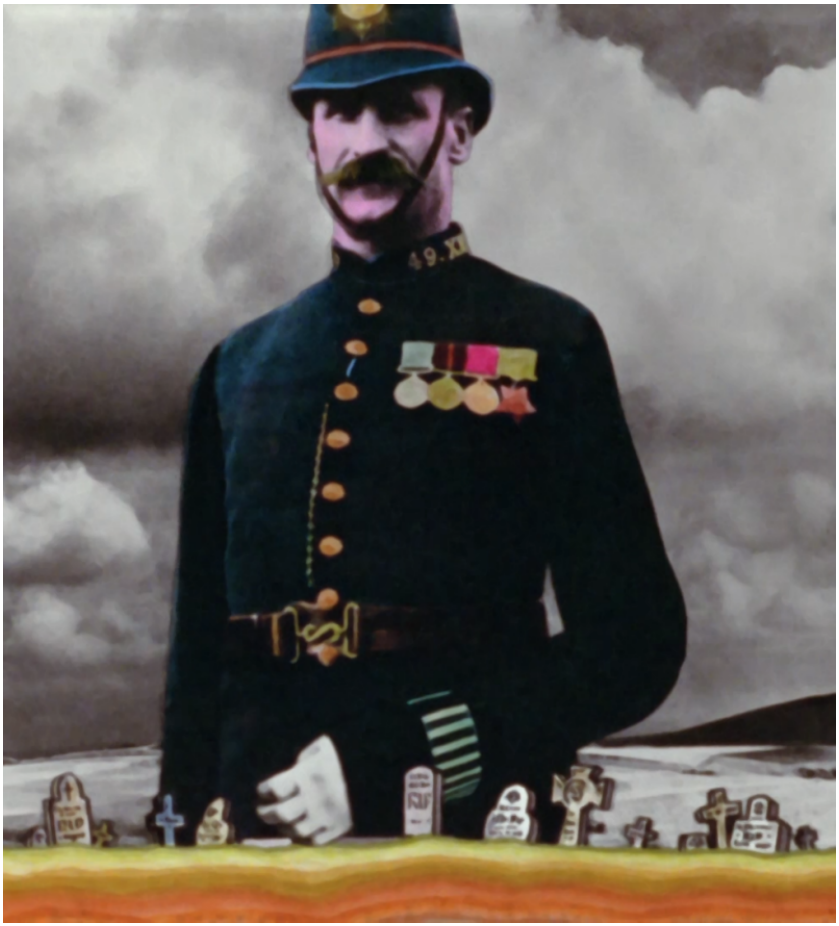


Going back to the drawing board, Simon Phipps - one-man graphics, animation and coding machine - took care of nearly all creative duties single-handedly, with the exception of the music, and certain design elements where he collaborated with Core's Greg Holmes.

Get out, Mr. Librarian Phipps, seeing as you're not a gorilla...

It's David Pridmore we have to thank for the inclusion of the authentic Flying Circus theme tune - The Liberty Bell march, a public domain composition originally by John Philip Sousa.

> "Like most of the stuff, it was all spur of the moment - if we liked it, we did it. We might have been talking about marches, or something martial, while trying to think of music for the opening. I just remember sitting there listening to a lot of music, when suddenly that thing came on, The Liberty Bell. I thought 'That's got to be it,' it was wonderful, just exactly right.
>
> So, we got it and I cut it down to thirty seconds; we rearranged it and cut sections out. It was the bell at the beginning that did it for me. Bong! It was a great way to start something. We cheated the bell so it's actually much louder than it is on the original recording."
>
> **Terry Gilliam**



There's a goldfish in a bag in it for you if you can tell me what happens next!

Ellenfelek

Flying Circus is chockfull of an estimated 150 enemy sprites, each either replicated from Terry Gilliams' 1978 'Animations of Mortality' sketchbook, or painstakingly drawn from scratch having watched the show on VHS tapes for research purposes… all 46 episodes

spanning 4 series over the course of a single weekend! A feat that would have been impossible had Terry Gilliam not purchased the recordings himself back in 1971… the BBC were planning to recycle them to save a few pennies! Be careful never to raise this topic with a die-hard Doctor Who fan.

Either way, all the game's artwork was initially hand-drawn on a medium we called 'paper' back in the dark ages, and subsequently imported into Art Studio to be brought to life. The bizarre parade and their most likely inspiration includes...

Helicopter hamsters - Likely a reference to 'Hamsters: A Warning', illustrations as seen in 'The Brand New Monty Python Papperbok' (1973). Looking further afield they may also be a tip of the hat towards the line "your mother was a hamster and your father smells of elderberries" from the movie, 'Monty Python and the Holy Grail'.

Stunted, stooped over gas engineers and cooker that spits them out - Escapees from 'The New Cooker' sketch of series 2 episode 1. Mrs Pinnet can only have her newly delivered cooker installed if she agrees to sign the paperwork as 'Mrs Crump' and stages a gas leak shaped emergency, which would allow the team to fit it as a priority.

Killer bees - 'Eric the Half-a-Bee', a song composed by Eric Idle and written by John Cleese, a spin-off from the 'Fish License' sketch.

Flying pigs - Flying pigs are funny in any language, though these are probably an allusion to the 'Motor Insurance Sketch' from series 2 episode 4, "and so on and so on". That or the piggy bank hunting sequence starring Neddy and Teddy and a giant hammer, also from series 2 (episode 7).

Bowler hatted businessmen with strange gait and method of locomotion - No prizes for guessing the significance of these stalwarts of Pythonian lore. 'The Ministry of Silly Walks' is a sketch - one of Cleese's least favourite because fans are forever asking him to reprise it on the spot - from series 2 episode 1 that satirises the absurd bureaucracy of British government.

"John Cleese and I were writing together one day, and John had been thinking of doing something about anger. He's very good at it, and he likes that emotion very much indeed. I'd been noticing that there were all sorts of ministries for strange things that were likely to distract people from the main issues of the day, and make it look

like the government was doing something. A lot of attention would either go to a drought or a flood that probably didn't exist anyway, and there seemed to be lots of useless ministries. I thought, why not a Ministry of Anger?

It's difficult to remember whether it was John's or my idea, but I do know that the next stage was Silly Walks, which was more ludicrous and petty than an emotion like anger.

My house was on a very steep hill, and we saw a man walk past, uphill, stooped very sharply backward, defying the laws of gravity! Well, we thought Silly Walks was a good idea, but we couldn't quite think how to develop it."

Graham Chapman

"It's not particularly silly, is it? I mean, the right leg isn't silly at all and the left leg merely does a forward aerial half turn every alternate step."

John Cleese in character

Crawling Thing hands - Taken from a Gilliam interlude animation in which a young girl waters a grave that sprouts Carrie/Evil Dead style hands, prunes them with a knife and collects them in a basket… as you do. Note also, there's a 'garden of hands' in series 2, episode 5.

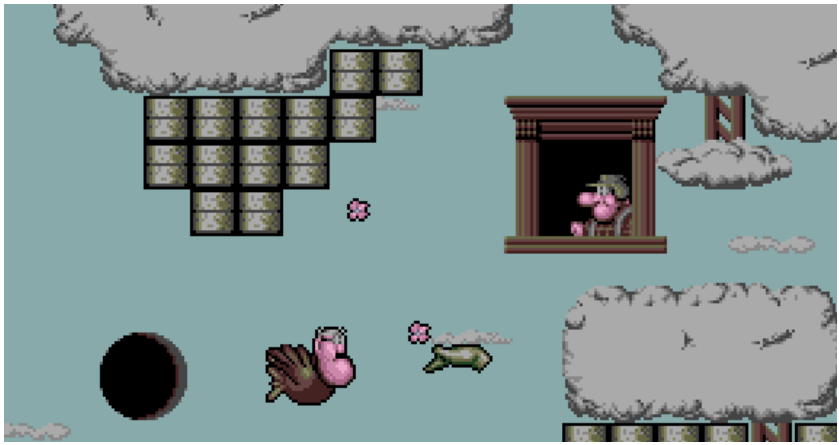
Angels with trumpets - see the opening titles animation. Their instruments were in the repair shop during this episode.

Flying sheep - The name of a sketch from series 1 episode 2 entitled, 'Sex and Violence' starring Harold the flying sheep. Spoiler: he gets shot down, knocking a nude lady out of a nest, causing traffic pileups and buildings to topple over. Sorry.

The Colonel - An officer of the British Army played by Graham Chapman who would recurrently interrupt sketches whenever they'd outstayed their welcome. Another offshoot of the 'no punchline' policy.

Military personnel in general (punalicious baby!) feature prominently in a number of episodes, however.

Axe throwing lumberjack - Another easy one; a reference to 'The Lumberjack Song' written by Michael Palin, Terry Jones & Fred Tomlinson. It was originally cobbled together in fifteen minutes as a conclusion to the Sweeney Todd tinged 'Barbershop' sketch featured in series 1 episode 9.



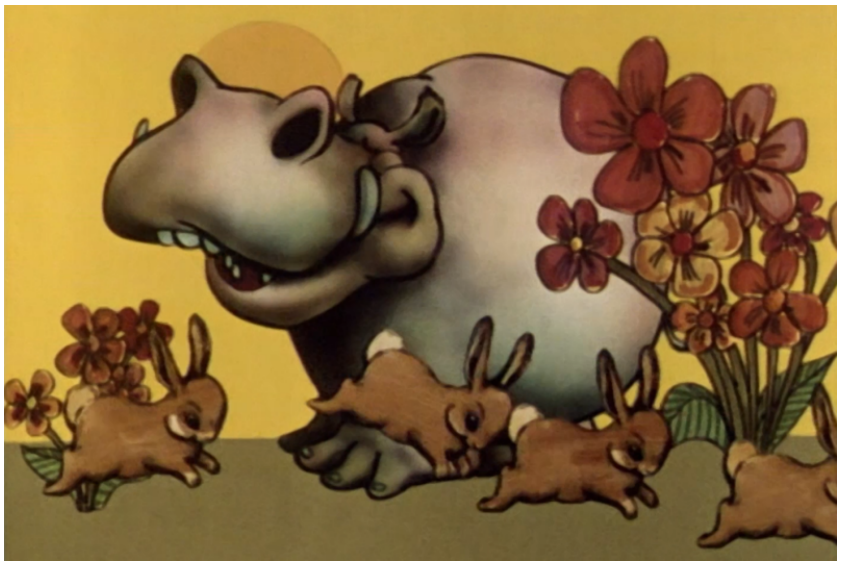
"It was about a quarter to seven in the evening, and we'd worked on a lot longer than we normally would. We were just about to give up, and someone shouted 'Supper in half an hour!' We were just ad-libbing, and had the barber say 'Oh, to hell with it! I don't want to be a barber anyway, I wanted to be a lumberjack!' And this huge spiel just came! Terry said 'Quick, we'll write it down!' And not only did the spiel come, it just seemed natural to go into a silly song, because, lumberjacks sing songs."

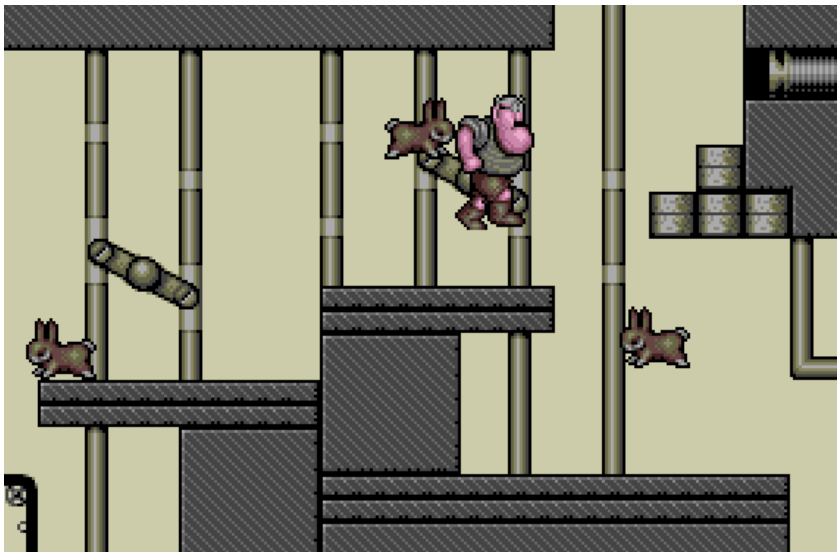
Michael Palin

Car with flapping bonnet - Inspired by the 'Killer Cars' sketch from episode 22 of series 2 in which cars develop sentience and begin attacking people to combat the "pedestrian congestion" problem.

> "There's a lot of 2001 influence in the cartoons. It's just taking something monumental and quite serious, and making jokes about it. It's easy to make jokes out of something that serious and on that scale. It's easy pickings - but it's also some wonderful stuff."
>
> **Terry Gilliam**

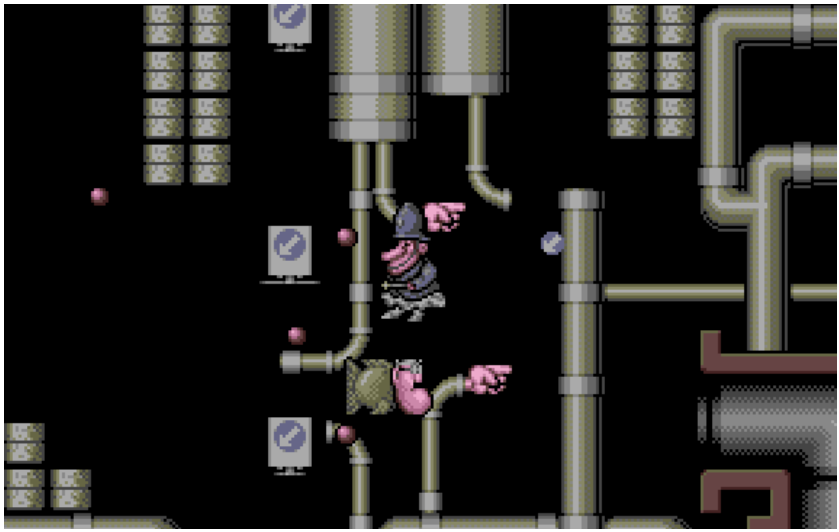
Fluffy cute rabbits that don't actually do you any harm at all - The 'Killer Rabbit of Caerbannog' from the 'Monty Python and the Holy Grail' movie springs to mind, though more apparent there's also an interlude animation in Flying Circus depicting the heart-warming tale of a fluffle of rabbits crushed by a hippopotamus having introduced the 'Storytime' sketch.





Keep left signs - As seen in the 'Hell's Grannies' sketch from series 1 episode 8 in which a vicar is attacked by a vicious gang of keep-left signs, and delinquent grannies terrorise the defenceless younger generation for sport.

Policemen - Flying Circus makes a habit of mocking supposed authority figures such as the police. They are often portrayed as insane, corrupt or incompetent oafs, on occasion turning up out of the blue to arrest the entire cast for violations against the 'getting out of sketches without using a proper punchline' act.



"We always used to get on about police corruption, and how thick the police were. Various police used to come and see the show, and they absolutely loved it.

We could do the most obvious attacks on the police, suggesting bribery and corruption and all sorts of venality, and they thought it was absolutely wonderful! It just shows that satire doesn't really change people at all. They never believe they're the target, they always think it's somebody else. For some reason, John Cleese is very friendly with the police - we're not sure why. He used to invite them along."

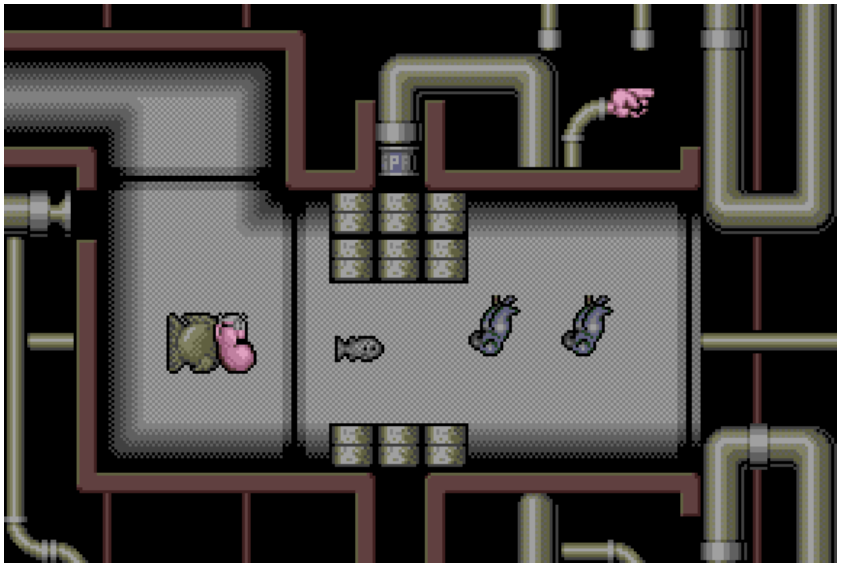
Michael Palin

"I've always been fascinated by the police. I think they do an extremely difficult job. Because I'm an introvert and a coward, I'm fascinated to know people who are extroverts and brave."

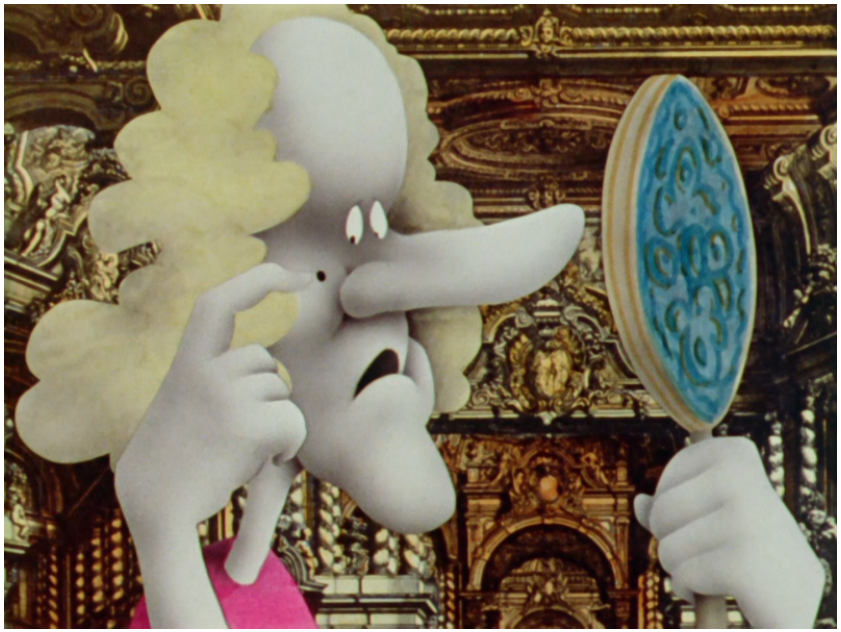
John Cleese

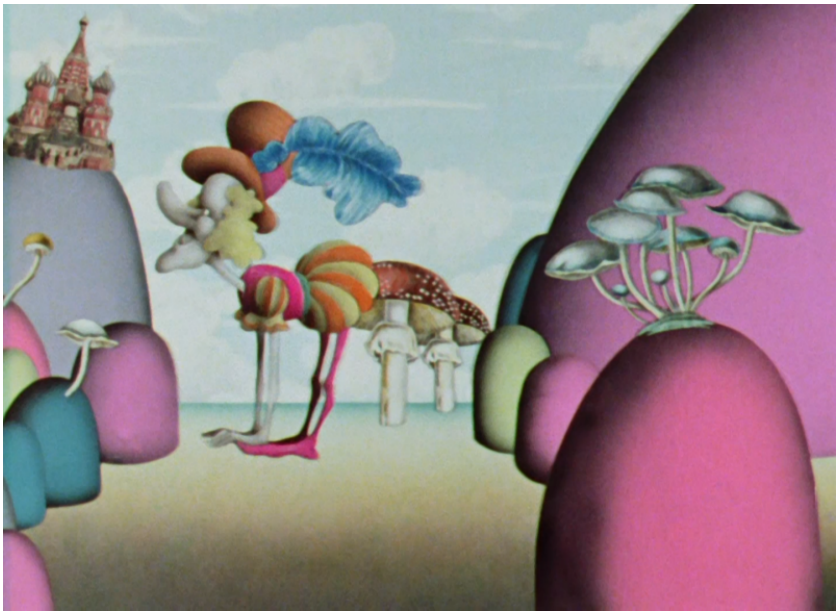
Oooh, suits you sir! Nothing at all to do with the 'Nudge, Nudge' sketch, though it *does* allow me to crowbar in the accusation that this is where the Fast Show nicked their 'Suit You Tailors' concept from.

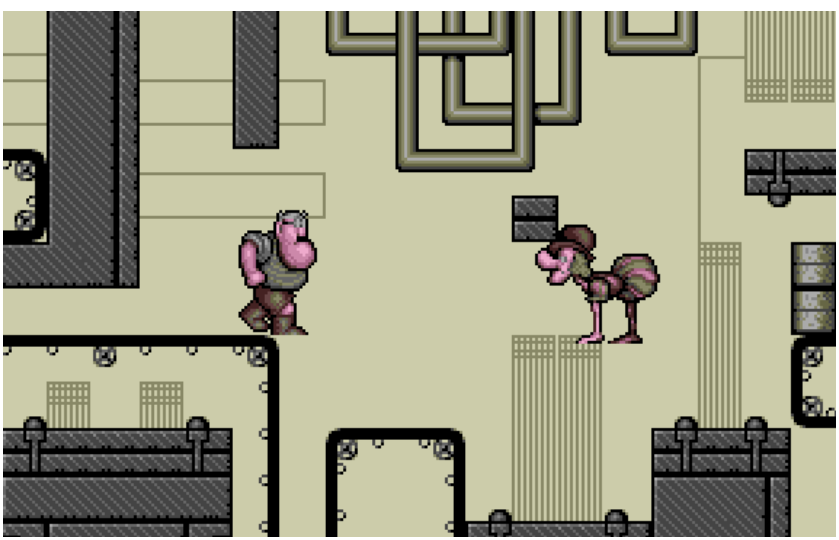
Raining ex-parrots - In honour of the 'Dead Parrot Sketch' from series 1 episode 8 written by Graham Chapman and John Cleese. In the originally draft this was to star Graham Chapman as the customer, and rather than a dead parrot, he was to complain about a dilapidated used car he'd just been sold by Michael Palin.



Man on all fours in Elizabethan garb - Taken from 'The Prince and the Black Spot' animation seen in series 2 episode 10. He develops a facial spot and dies three years later from *gangrene* (following the BBC's overzealous censorship), though the spot lives on independently.







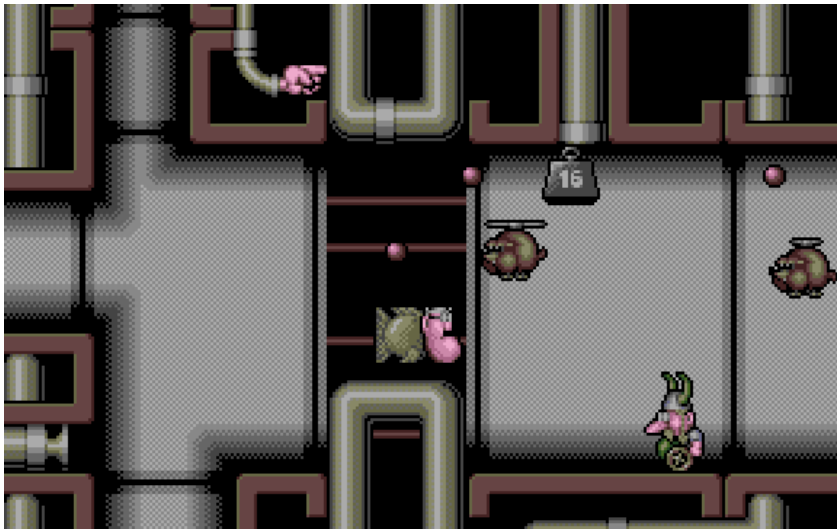
"That's the most bizarre, silly, stupid thing, because it went out, millions of people watched it, and the world didn't

change - so, I don't know why one changes it on the repeats.

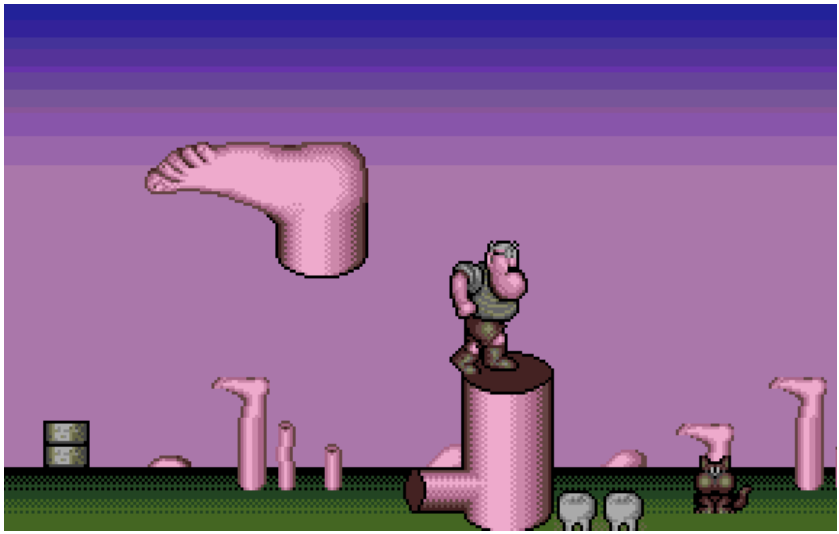
It's just crazy. Who's protecting who from what? I don't know. I didn't think it was dangerous to mention the word 'cancer', but it obviously touched a fear that a lot of people didn't want to deal with."

Terry Gilliam

Upright and upside down Spam eating Vikings on unicycles - Terry Jones wrote and directed the movie 'Erik the Viking'. John Cleese plays 'Halfdan the Black'. More obvious, however, there are the spontaneously singing, unshutupable Vikings from the 'Spam' sketch (S02E12)… "Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam, Spammity Spam, Wonderful Spam."



Exploding cats - Refers to the 'Psychiatrist Milkman' segment from series 2 episode 5. For further catisfaction see 'Confuse-a-Cat' from series 1 episode 5, or Gilliam's stop-motion 'Killer Cats' animation from series 2 episode 9.



Wait for it... wait for it... any moment now... Boooom!!! ...correction, now an ex-cat.

"I had noticed a neighbour's lawn for the last two weeks. It was very carefully tended - she even brushed it - but there was a cat on it, which was always in the exact same position. No matter what happened, it didn't move. It didn't even move in moderate rainstorms. It would just sit.

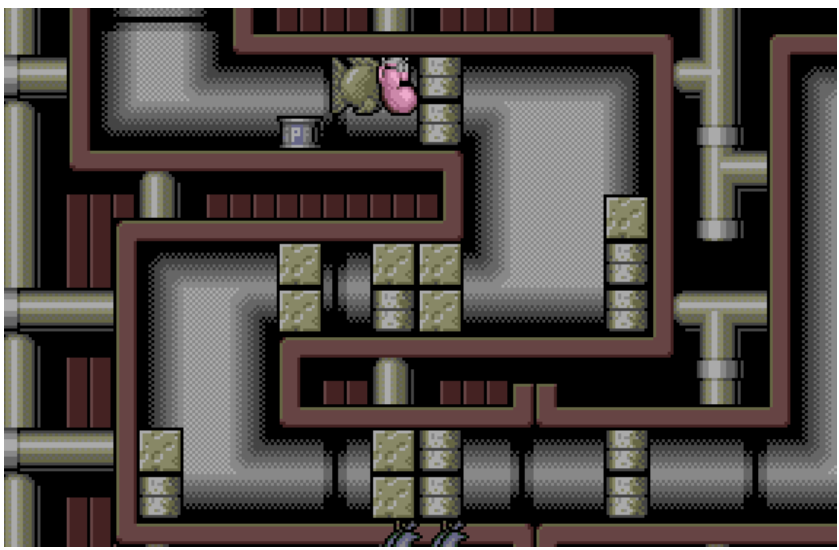
So, I discussed this with John, and wondered what the problem was with the cat. We decided that it was complacent, and had seen it all, and therefore needed shaking out of its complacency. So Confuse-a-Cat, Ltd., were the guys for the job! That sketch came about purely from what was around."

Graham Chapman

Kozjatekok

To mirror the structure of the TV show, the game's action is regularly interrupted by set pieces that serve absolutely no purpose other than to tip the absurdity-o-meter ever closer to breaking point. These were originally introduced to dissect the neverending sketch format, given that the patchwork sequences had no clear-cut conclusions.

Here we have finite levels that wrap up neatly with a guardian spat, followed by an environmental theme shift, but still, as the goal was to drop the gamer headfirst into the Python cosmos, they could hardly be omitted. Yes they could, they're bloody irritating! No, they're not. Yes, they are.

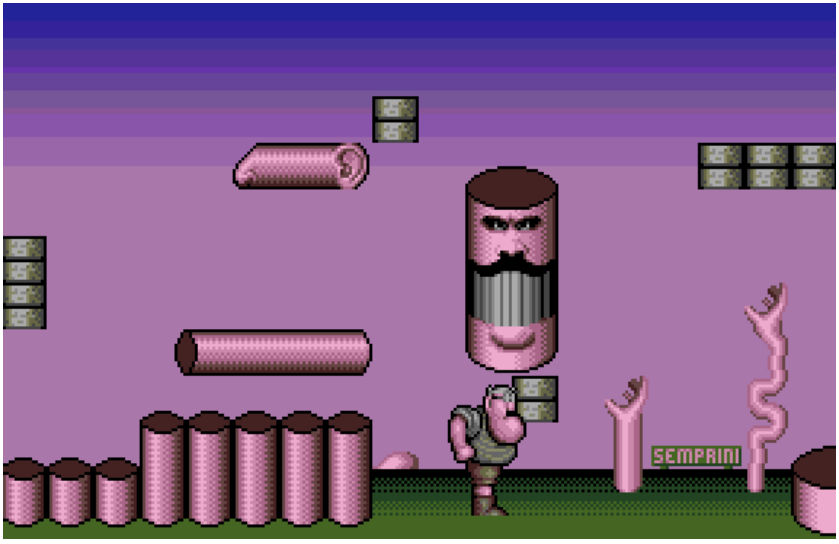


"Big Business Welcomes North

Malden"

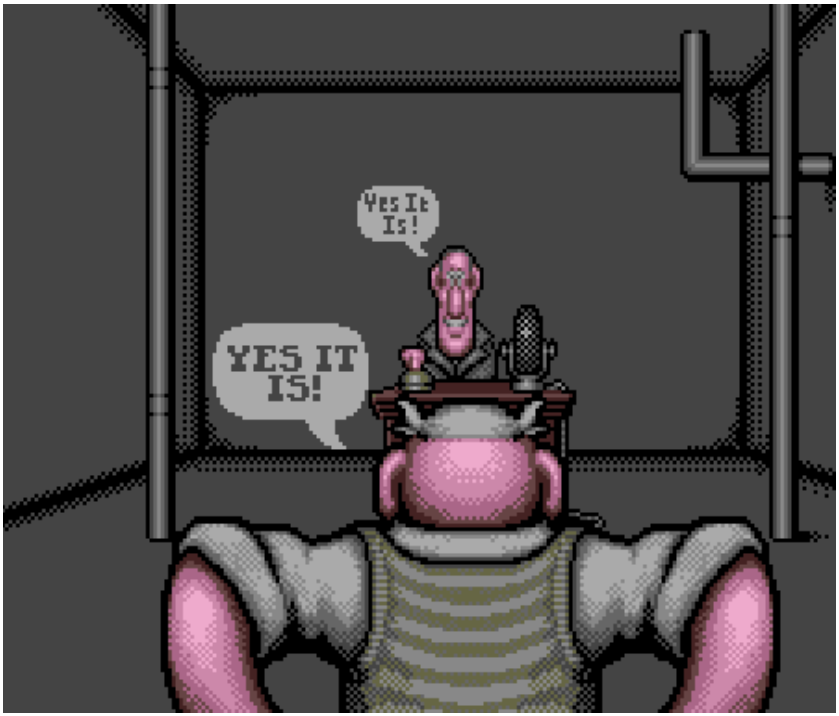
Where was I? Ah yes, for your parody-spotting delight and delectation these include pixelated reinterpretations of the following iconic interlude sketches...

'How to Recognize Different Parts of the Body' (S02E09) - A picture of one anatomical ancillary or another annotated with its name. Hardly educational seeing as foot, hand and so on aren't exactly arcane technical terms. You know, I think that's the point.


SEMPRINI

'Semprini' is used by a chemist as a euphemism in series 2 episode 2. It's also the word you'd enter in the game's low score table to enable the level selection and bonus revealing cheat.

'Argument Clinic' (S03E03) - If this were the famous consultation-esque sketch you would be playing Michael Palin who pays for the privilege of contradicting John Cleese as a form of vocal or cerebral stimulation exercise. Here you select the polar opposite phrase in rapid-fire rebuttal by pushing the joystick in the contrary direction to the location of the speech bubble. The digitised audio is sampled directly from the TV show… a nice touch that certainly boosts the immersion factor.

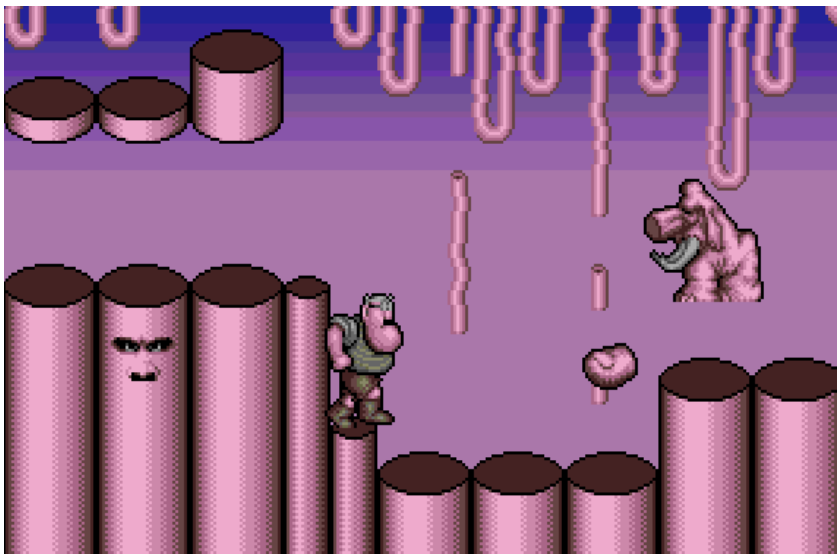


'How to Recognise Different Types of Trees from Quite a Long Way Away' (S01E03) - Much like the body parts filler screen, only this time depictions of tree species are displayed along with their name. You never know, it *could* be the tiebreaker in a pub quiz one day… and as long as the question concerns the Larch or Horse Chestnut, you'll ace it.

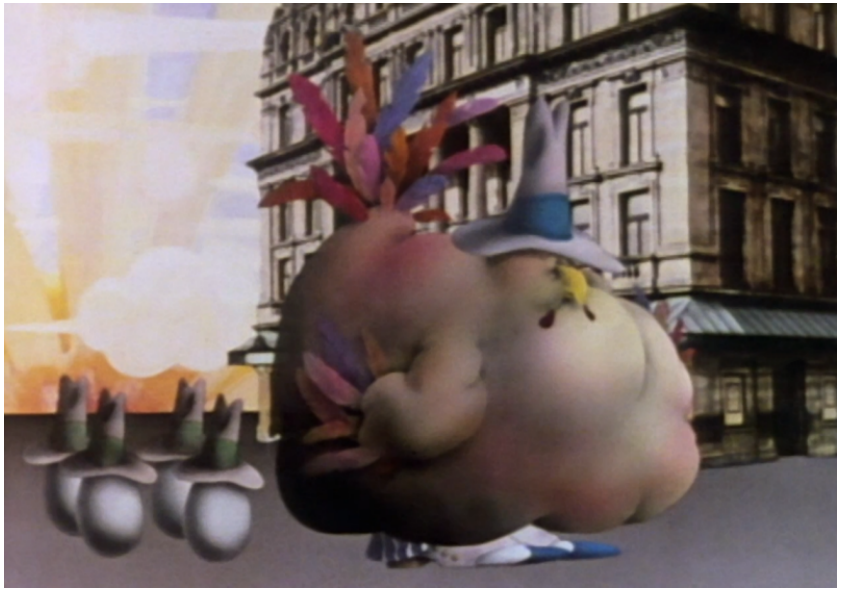
Vege szinten orei

Each level reaches its crescendo with an altercation involving a zany bad-bottom boss character, also extrapolated from the uniquely ludicrous Python tapestry. In no particular order, in honour of the not so linear show...

There's the pink woolly mammoth that shoots human big toes at you from its trunk, taken from series 2 episode 8 entitled 'Archaeology Today'. It represents an archaeologist's interpretation of a creature that lived a zillion years ago extrapolated from the excavation of part of its anatomy… i.e. the toe.

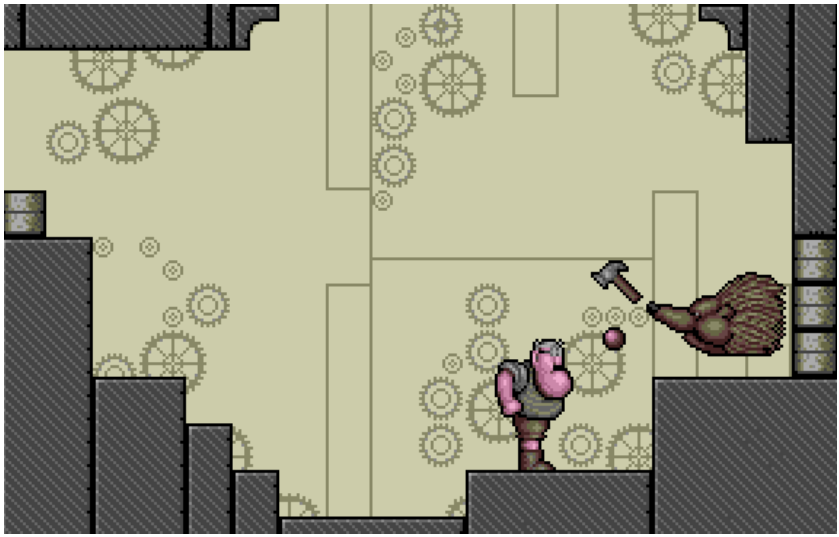


A misshapen, pointy hat bedecked turkey as seen in one of Terry Gilliam's stop-motion animations (known as 'Eggs Diamond and his gang'); a kind of Jabba the Turkey if you like. Perhaps Gilliam intended it to look like a cross between Mr Creosote and plucked poultry.



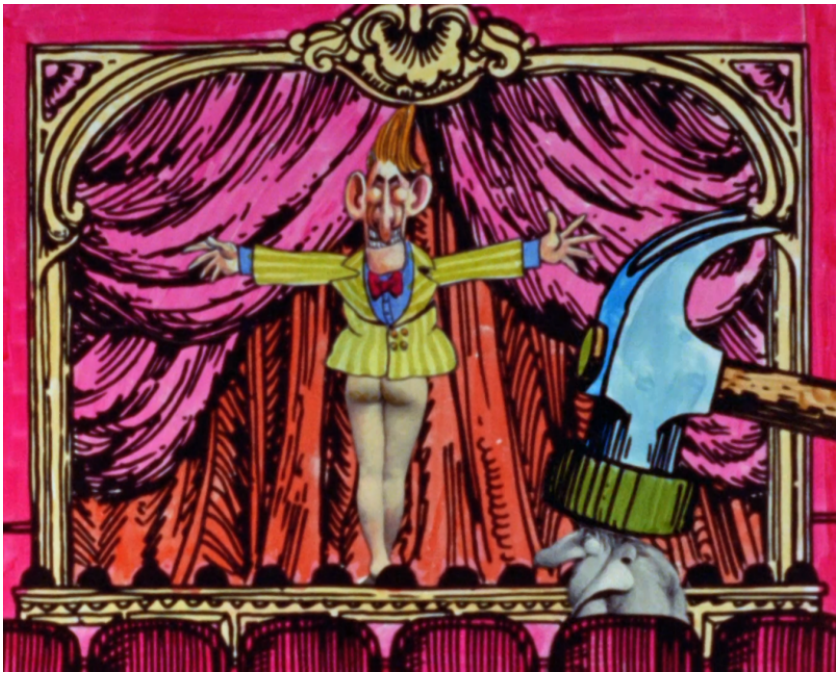
Then there's the anything from 12 feet to 800 yards long imaginary (or is it?) hedgehog known as 'Spiny Norman' that flings hammers and rubber balls at you, as well as varying in size in accordance

with the conjuror's current level of depression and living in an aircraft hangar at Luton airport.

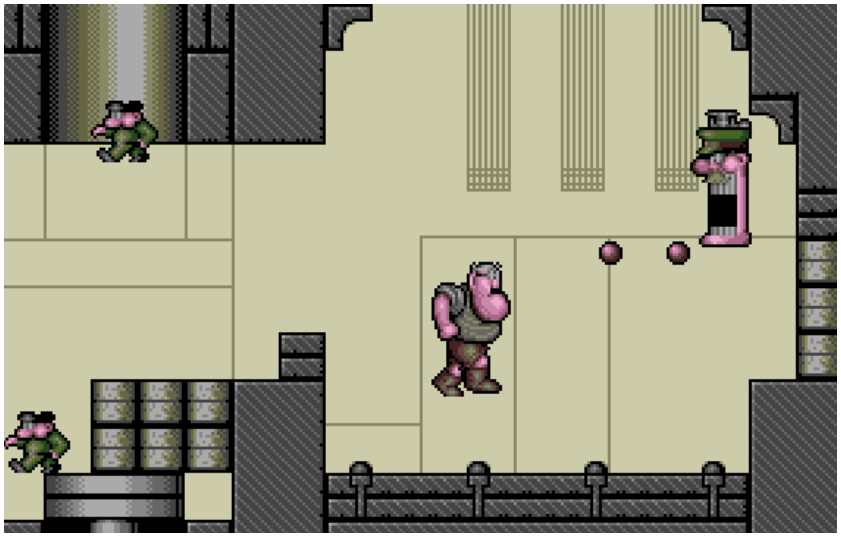


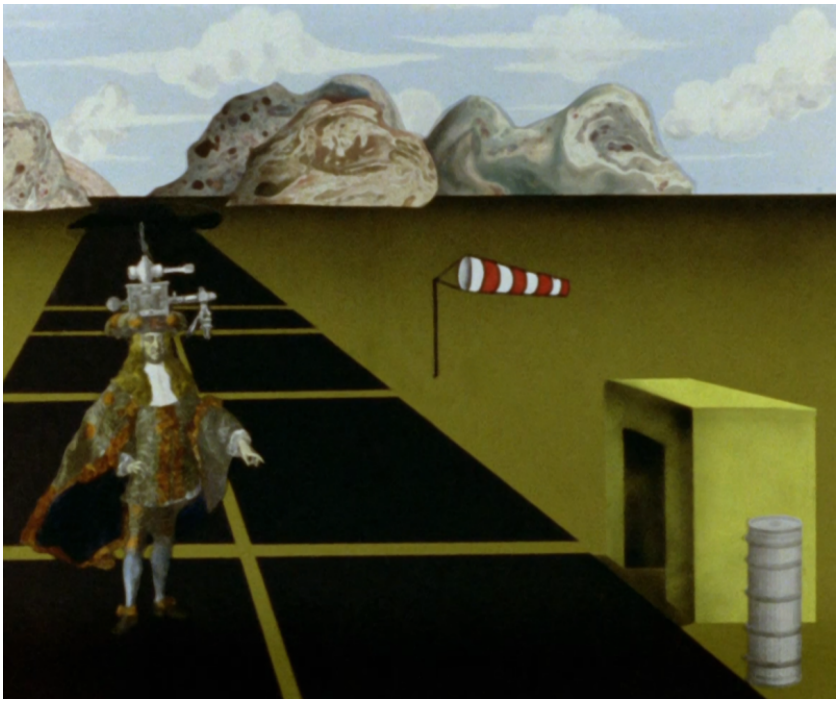
He's taken from episode one of the second series - 'Piranha Brothers' - starring Doug and Dinsdale Piranha. Modelled on the Kray twins, the sociopathic criminals deploy a combination of violence, puns, bathos, sarcasm, dramatic irony, metaphor, parody, litotes and satire to subjugate the London underworld. That and nailing people's heads to the floor (that is the singular head of multiple, separate individuals, not individuals with multiple heads, just to be

clear). Hammers are another punchline substitute.

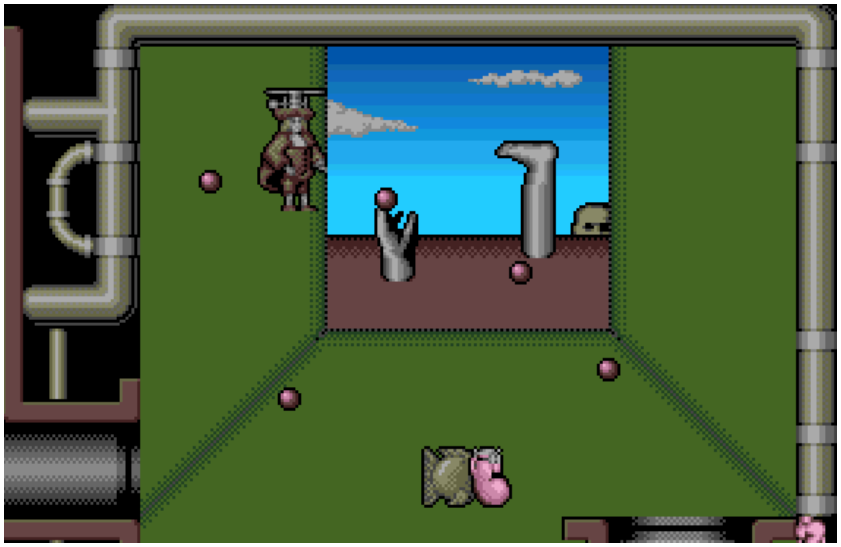


A mustachioed army Colonel hovering head with a detachable helicopter hat and gaping mouth that shoots rubber ball projectiles. Running with the moustache theme, a scene from series three's intro. My apologies for the tenuous link. See earlier discussion of punchline substitutes.





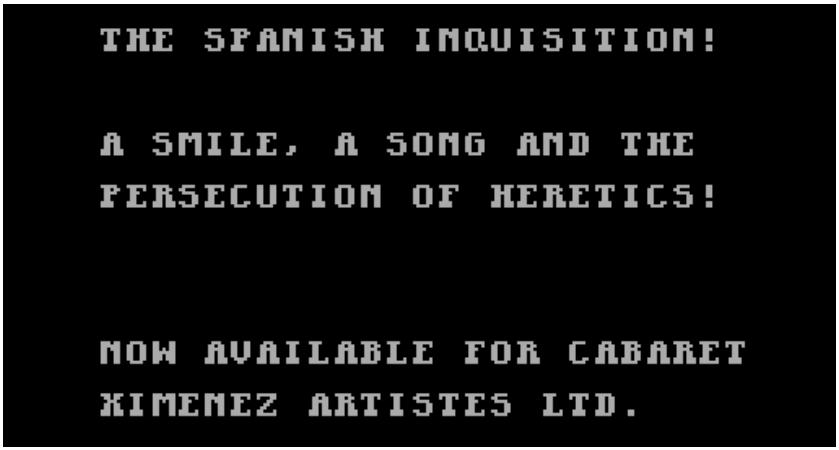
Just when you least expect it, up pops a "vintage model European monarch" who levitates by way of another heli-hat gadget. His signature method of attack is to launch spherical projectiles at you. Flying Circus is jam-packed with famous historical figure centric satire. The Python troupe are Oxford/Cambridge educated graduates, they know their history and took every opportunity to mock it mercilessly. This particular monarch was reproduced from an animation sequence found in series 2 episode 1.



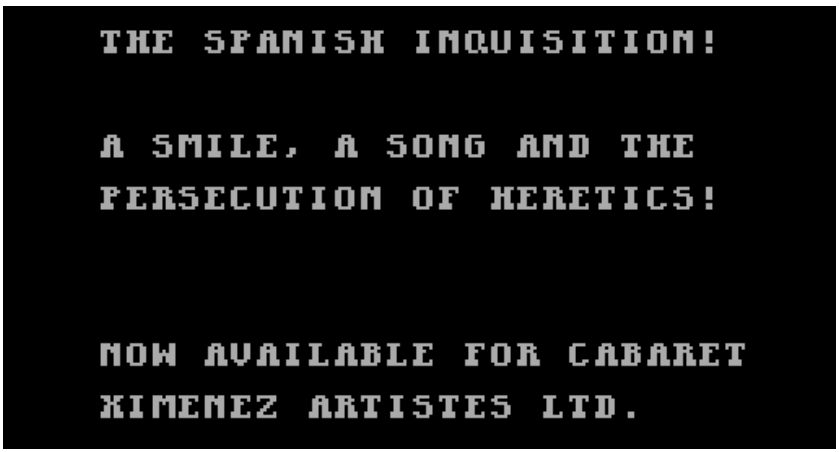
Naturally 'Le Fromage Grand' is the chief Spanish Inquisition interrogator - Cardinal Ximinez - who hurtles around in an airborne 'comfy chair' discharging soft cushions at you.

'Spanish Inquisition' is the title of series 2 episode 2, one that revolves around various parodies of the characters' 16th-century real-life counterparts. They all begin with a trivial remark that

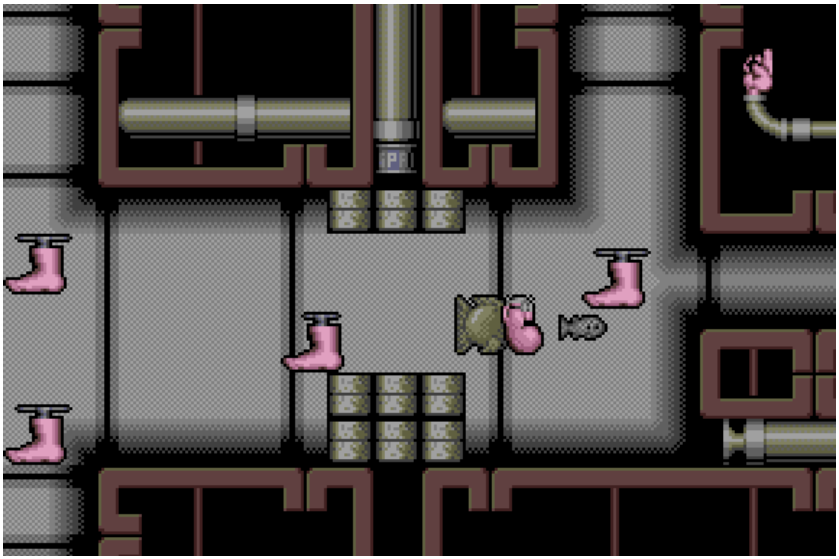
rapidly descends into an intense barrage of probing questions, culminating in the spontaneous appearance of the Cardinal and his henchmen who deliver the catchphrase, "no-one expects the Spanish Inquisition".



"Our chief weapon is surprise! Surprise and fear! Fear and surprise - our two weapons are fear and surprise and ruthless efficiency - our three weapons are fear, surprise, and ruthless efficiency, and an almost fanatical devotion to the Pope - our four - no... amongst our weapons... amongst our weaponry, are such elements as fear, surprise... I'll come in again."



Kovetkeztetes



Putting the nosy parker in his place, the final consumables gifting session takes place between yourself and your charlady better half, Mrs Gumby.

Assuming you managed to collect sufficient Spam along the way to earn all four morsels of your sentient brain, they leap back inside your skull unprompted. Old grabby hand replaces your cranium, you transform into a bowler hat-wearing businessman and scuttle off-screen crab-style to enter into the "exciting world of chartered accountancy". No doubt we would have become a lion tamer had we not been advised against it by a vocation guidance counsellor.

A commercial break follows to inform you of the "other games in this series: Advanced Stockbroker Simulator, Mr Putey Goes Quantity Surveying, Hack, Slay, Maim and Bookkeeping, Ninja Freemasonry, and many others."

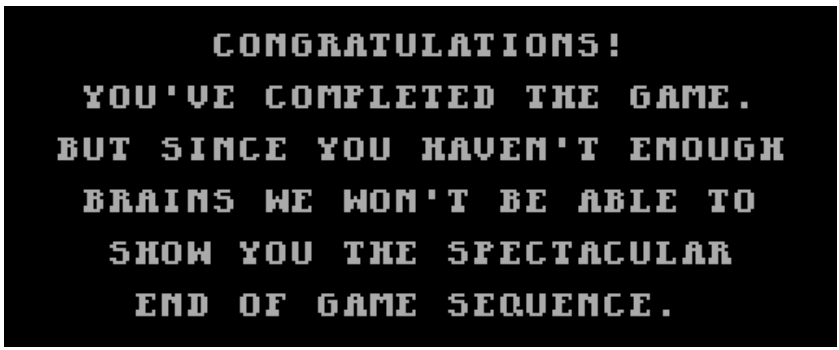
"Eth Ned"

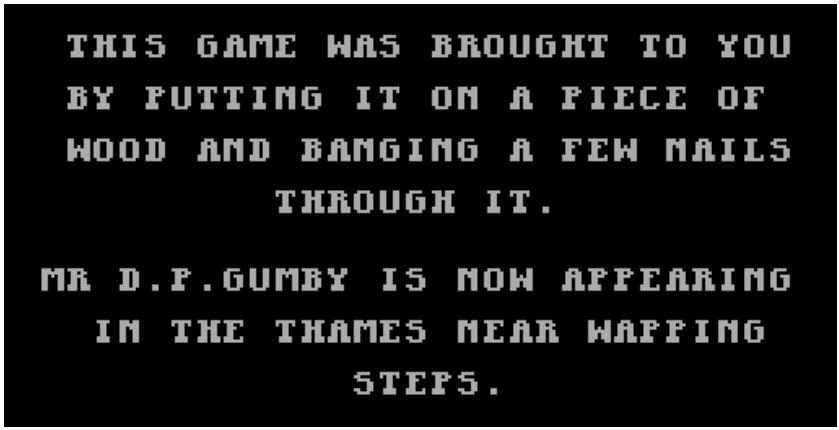
An anagram of 'The End' obviously, a reference to the 'The Man Who Speaks in Anagrams' sketch (S03E04). It's like page 71 all over again. "Oh, what a disappointment." Not that I'm one to complain; I'd be inundated with complaints and my email provider wouldn't

approve of that sort of malarkey. That certainly *would* give them cause for complaint.

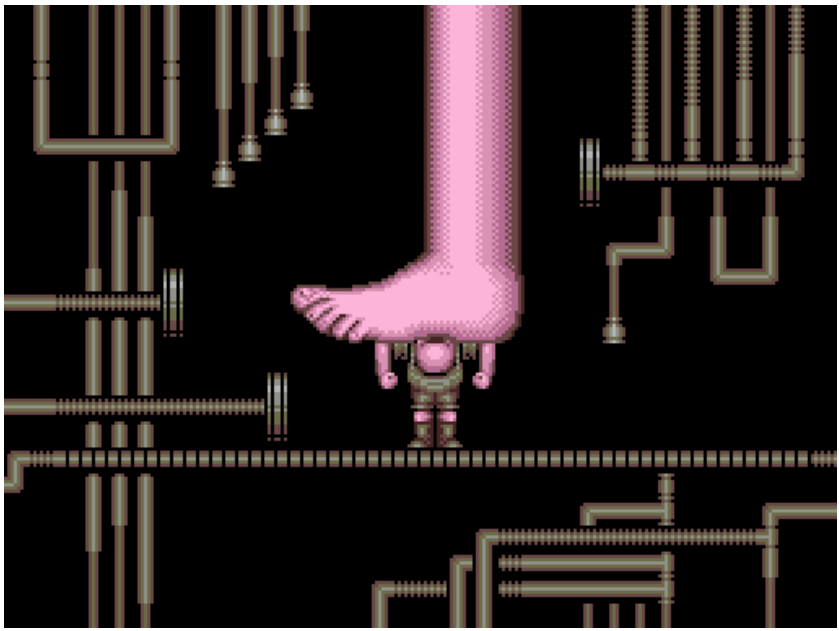
> "I have one of those creative dyslexic brains which tends to look at a word, and break it up, and look at it backward." - **Eric Idle**

Reach the denouement failing to acquire all four hunks of your brain and you'll instead be treated to a picture of a frog, and a message apologising for not being able to show you the "spectacular end of game sequence". Somehow I suspect a spot of comedic mock hyperbole is at work here.


CONGRATULATIONS!
YOU'VE COMPLETED THE GAME.
BUT SINCE YOU HAVEN'T ENOUGH
BRAINS WE WON'T BE ABLE TO
SHOW YOU THE SPECTACULAR
END OF GAME SEQUENCE.


THIS GAME WAS BROUGHT TO YOU
BY PUTTING IT ON A PIECE OF
WOOD AND BANGING A FEW NAILS
THROUGH IT.
MR D.P.GUMBY IS NOW APPEARING
IN THE THAMES NEAR WAPPING
STEPS.

Personally, the masochist in me would prefer to have been squished by Cupid's giant foot. Say, one borrowed from the Renaissance masterpiece 'Venus, Cupid, Folly and Time' by Bronzino. Then again, that's precisely what happens whenever we die - we wouldn't want to flog a dead Gumby now, would we?



Velemenyek

Analogous to the Pythons themselves, critics approached the accompanying game like a Marmite and floppy disk sandwich. Some embraced the rabid lunacy, seizing upon the most tenuous triggers to catapult proceedings into a recital of their favourite lines from the show (perish the thought!), whilst those who weren't already card-carrying fans honed in on the lack of variety and tendency to rely too heavily on the goodwill of those invested in the franchise.

Call it what you will - 'Owl Stretching Time', 'The Toad Elevating Moment', 'A Horse', 'Spoon and a Bucket', 'Vaseline Review', 'Bun, Wackett, Buzzard, Stubble and Boot', 'Whither Canada?', 'The Algy Banging Hour', or 'Ow! It's Colin Plint' - as it may well have been known as in another time and dimension, it's certainly not a game to go unnoticed. More of a blimp on the radar than a blip.

If I were to plonk a random smattering of scores and opinions into the gap below to give you an overview of the sort of reception with which Flying Circus was met back in 1991, it may well look a lot like this...

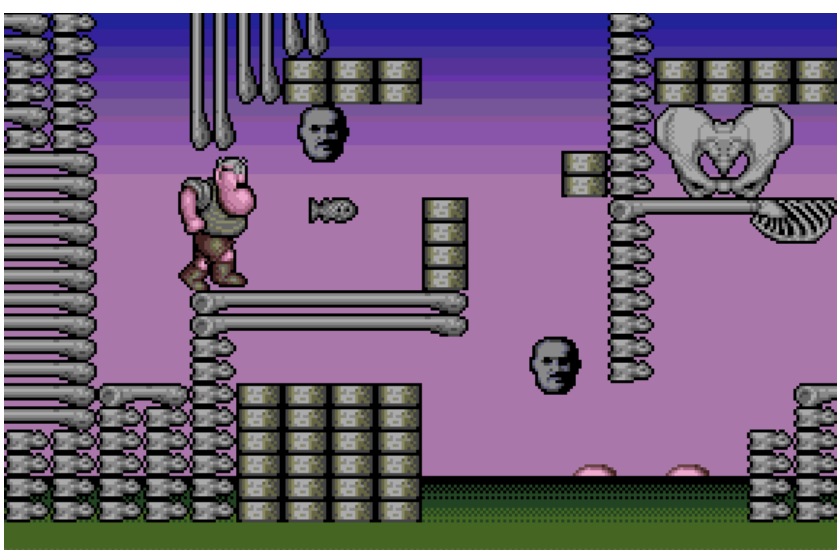
Amiga Action - 74%

"I must be the only person in the world who doesn't like Monty Python. I find the so-called classic humour dated, but, luckily, this can't be said about the game. Graphically, the game is excellent with dozens of interruptions popping up when you least expect them, along with some of the weirdest adversaries you are ever likely to encounter. That said, the gameplay follows a distinctly repetitive nature which I found a little dull." - **Doug**

"The visual presentation of Monty Python is close to the

original animations but you don't have to be a fan to appreciate the many dead parrots and men with silly walks that you encounter. However, behind some neat presentation and some effective samples, lurks a slightly repetitive game. Gumby's adventures start off well enough, but, despite the odd sub-game, there is very little variation. This is the only failing in an otherwise playable game." - **Steve**

"The humour that is used in the Monty Python television series has been brilliantly adapted onto the Amiga, with such as arguing with John Cleese and the 'Spam' sketch brought back wonderful memories. However, I think that the game borrows too much from the TV series and therefore anybody who has not watched the TV show may not understand some of the jokes. I fail to see the lasting appeal of the game, and although I was impressed by the graphics and weird sounds, I can't see myself returning to the Flying Circus." - **Alex**



Now he's found his backbone, Mr Gumby proves it's hip to be square.

Amiga Computing - 82%

"Laughing at yourself is a cathartic experience, and we don't do enough of it in this industry. My only complaint is that the game is a bit on the difficult side. If it were a normal arcade game, I might say it was a bit easy, but trying to concentrate on reaching the end of the level when falling off your chair with laughter is bound to lose a number of lives."

Amiga Format - 88%

"It would have been all too easy too just bang out a bog-standard platform game with a few Python-related characters bouncing about and rely on the name to shift units. Core have done a surprisingly good job of translating the feel of the Python gang's humour to the Amiga, from the superb graphics to the occasional intermissions, where an obscure off-the-wall gag appears. Behind the impressive appearance, the game itself is rather playable, which means that those unfamiliar with Python humour can get into the gameplay. In fact, there's only one thing wrong with the game… you don't get wafers with it."

Amiga User - 59%

"If it's cheap laughs you want, have a browse through the PD demo ads. Novelties are all very well, but if you're looking for a decent game that will keep you coming back, look elsewhere."

Call this a court? I do feel a 'gill-tea' sentence passed via trial by charades would have been more appropriate, then ours is not to reason why.

"And now for something completely different…"

The trouble with both Monty *and* Mr Python is that much of their work drags on far too long with no tangible finish line in sight, when really it should be put out to pasture, way before the audience is irretrievably lost.

Their Amiga game reviews are the absolute worst for this. When ideally, stringing a few pithy sentences together by way of a token gesture to round off an article would suffice, they'd warble on and on and on, and then to add insult to injury, stick in the crusty, dog-eared sentiments of a bunch of critics who probably now work for Nintendo Switch Format or Your Raspberry Pi.

Although rare, occasionally they'd forget to cover the non-Amiga ports and readers would enjoy a minor reprieve from the excessive

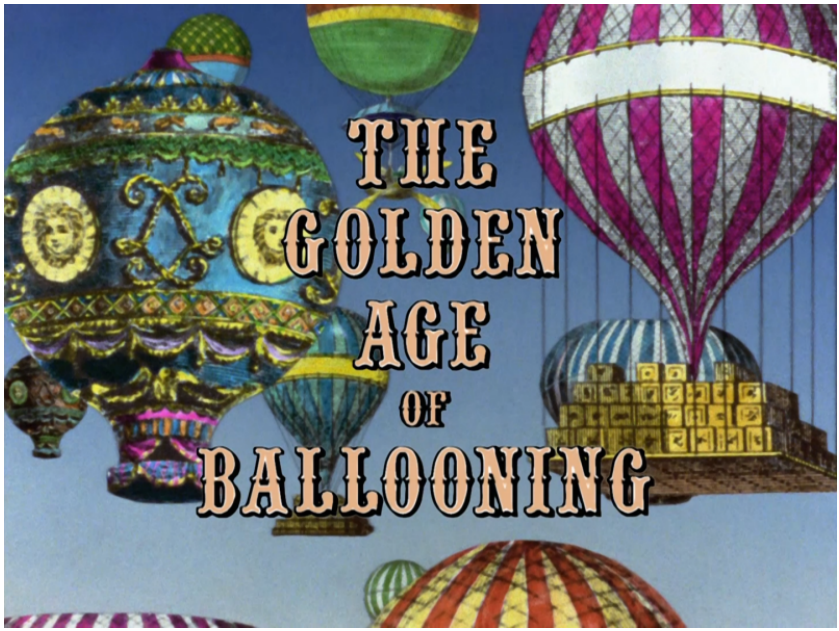
verbosity, if not the flowery linguistics. Sesquipedalian loquaciousness simply isn't called for in an Amiga game review. The sooner that's lobotomized into one's convertible-topped cranium the better.

Take the review at hand for instance. They haven't mentioned that the Amstrad, Commodore 64 and Spectrum ports are pretty much identical to the original in terms of design and mechanics. Only the flick-screen scrolling, deviating graphics and sound capabilities of the respective systems sets them apart.

Rather than draw a line under it at the appropriate juncture they'd add layer upon layer of useless trivia, tips and irrelevant tangents. Do we have to go through this rigmarole every time, Derek? Just throw it to the ducks! At least then we could toddle off and mow the hands or take a custard bath. You know, do something at least a smidgen productive?

Often they wouldn't even get back on track long enough to spotlight the crucial details of a game a prospective purchaser might require to make an informed decision… which systems it runs on, how much it costs, and how efficiently it controls, for instance. 'Shoddy' and 'slapdash' don't begin to cover it.

Sometimes the supposed 'summary' would even descend into a never-ending, self-indulgent, meandering soliloquy that goes precisely nowhere and back again, yet because it harps on so long it can seem epicly worthy, to anyone who hasn't already checked out and left the building that is.



Yes, I think the best way to describe a Monty Python Amiga review is sort of, kind of, "Round like a circle in a spiral, like a wheel within a wheel, Never ending or beginning on an ever-spinning reel, Like a snowball down a mountain, or a carnival balloon, Like a carousel that's turning running rings around the moon, Like a clock whose hands are sweeping past the minutes on its face, And the world is like an apple whirling silently in space, Like the circles that you find in the windmills of your mind".

Sorry, I don't make a habit of breaking into song, I don't know what came over me there. I'm sure you catch my drift, follow the nub of my gist, are on the same page and singing from the same hymn sheet. I'd hate to labour the point unnecessarily.

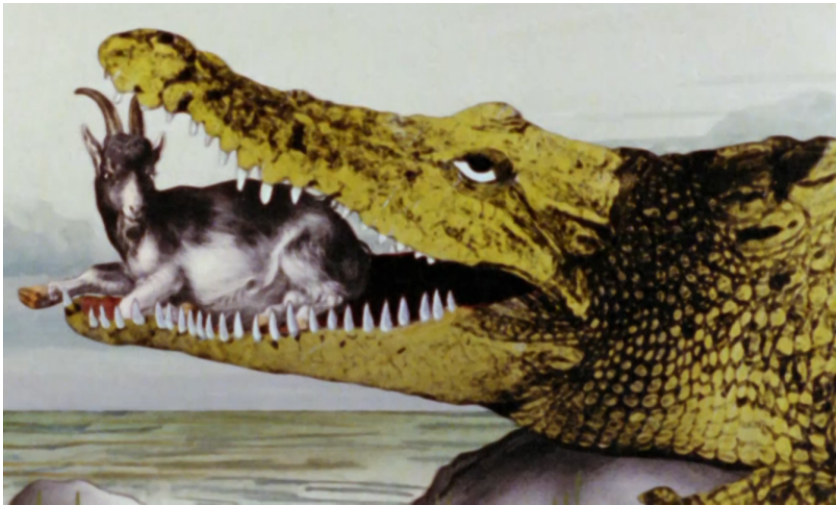
An American flag backdrop also features in the Flying Circus game: either a reference to the Crelm animation seen here, or possibly Terry Gilliam's nationality, what with him being the 'imported American animator'.

Spot the Crelm reference - a Gilliam animated parody of life-changing toothpaste TV commercials. The miracle ingredient in this one is 'Fraudulin'. He's got your number!

Your best hope of salvation and a 'class dismissed' bell would be for one to keep waffling aimlessly for so long that sooner or later someone takes pity and puts one out of one's misery by way of lethal Catzilla stompage, or a porcupine based incendiary device ...or whatever.

> "Well, that's about it for tonight, ladies and gentlemen. But remember, if you've enjoyed reading this review just half as much as I've enjoyed doing it, then I've enjoyed it twice as much as you!"

"Look there's not really a great deal of point in your, sort of hanging on at your end, because I'm afraid there aren't any more jokes or anything."

"OK, meeting adjourned forever."

Well that was predictable.